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BICYCLE RULES OF THE ROAD



Jesse White
Secretary of State

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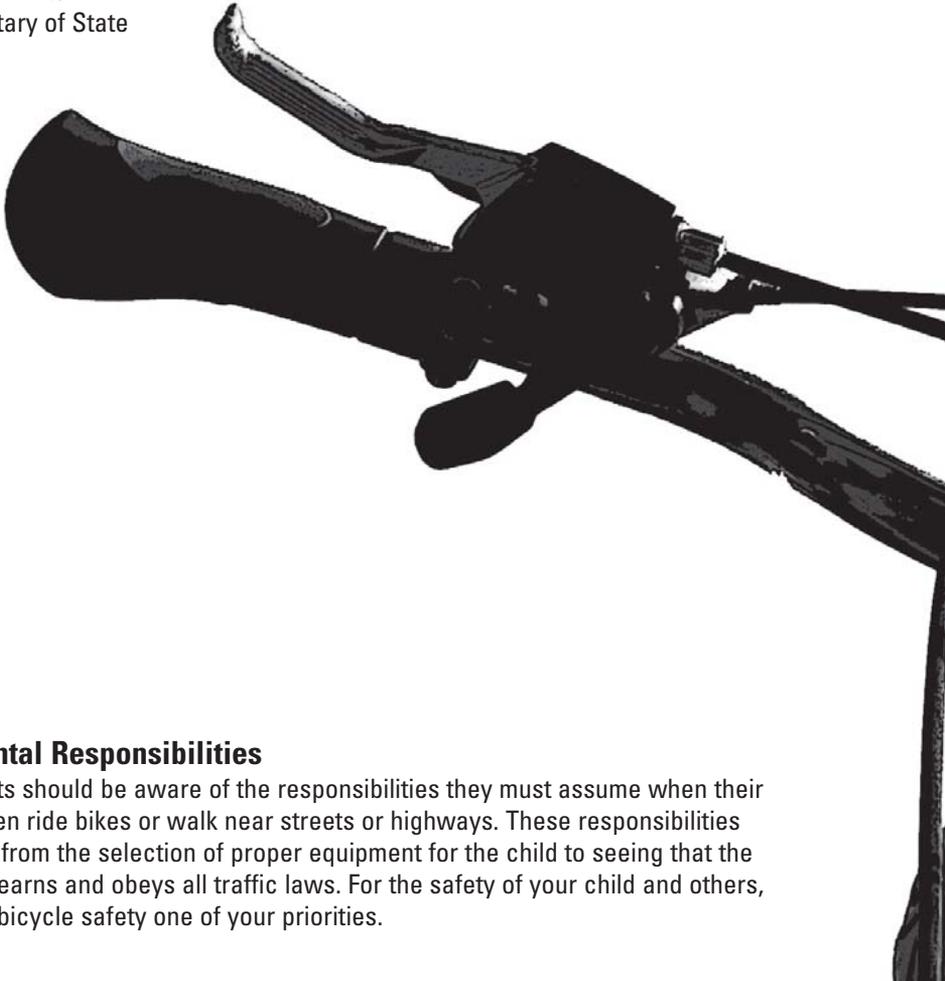
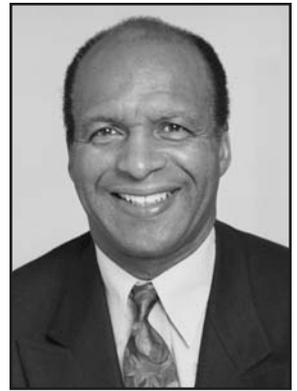
Bicycle riding is a great way to get into shape and enjoy the outdoors. To remain safe on Illinois roads, it is important to follow the same traffic safety laws that govern vehicle drivers.

No amount of bicycle safety equipment can adequately protect a rider from the dangerous force of a car or truck if involved in a vehicle collision. The best way to avoid injury is by being prepared for the dangers that streets pose to bicycle riders and by obeying the rules of the road.

This booklet provides bicyclists the information needed to stay safe while sharing the road with motorists. Learning and practicing the bicycle rules of the road is your responsibility. The short time it takes to read this booklet and practice what you have learned can provide a lifetime of safe bicycle riding.

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Parental Responsibilities

Parents should be aware of the responsibilities they must assume when their children ride bikes or walk near streets or highways. These responsibilities range from the selection of proper equipment for the child to seeing that the child learns and obeys all traffic laws. For the safety of your child and others, make bicycle safety one of your priorities.

Obey all Traffic Laws and Signals

- When riding your bicycle on Illinois roadways, you must obey the same traffic laws, signs and signals that apply to motorists.
- Bicyclists must ride in the same direction as other traffic. Riding in the opposite direction of traffic is both dangerous and against the law.
- Motorists are required by law to allow at least 3 feet of space between them and a bicyclist when passing.

Riding on Sidewalks

- When walking or riding your bicycle on a sidewalk or along a crosswalk you must obey all pedestrian signs and signals.
- Bicyclists must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians on sidewalks or crosswalks. Slow down and go around them when possible.
- When approaching a pedestrian from behind, slow down and give an audible signal to alert them of your presence before passing them.

Pavement Markings

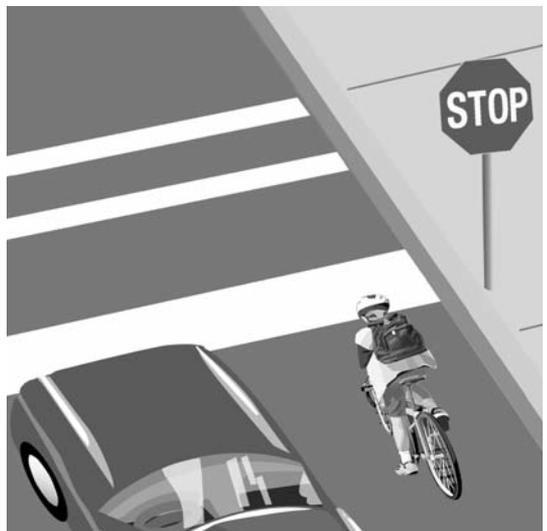
Pavement markings warn and direct drivers and bicycle riders and regulate traffic.

White Stop Line — Shows you where you must stop for a traffic light or stop sign.

Pedestrian Crosswalks — Many intersections have white lines that show pedestrian crosswalks. Watch for people walking between these lines. Pedestrians have the right-of-way (see below).

Center Lines — A double yellow center stripe indicates there is more than one lane of traffic moving in both directions and crossing the line is prohibited (except to turn out of or into a driveway or alley). White dashes mark the lane separations on either side of the double yellow stripe. You should ride on the right side of the right lane, except to pass or to make a left turn. Where there is only one lane for traffic in each direction and passing is permitted, the center of the street is marked with a broken yellow stripe.

Directions and Arrows — Some busy streets have lanes with individual directions painted on them, such as “left only” or “right only,” or an arrow pointing straight ahead. You must follow the directions of the arrows painted on those lanes.





Left Turn Signal



Right Turn Signal
(using left arm)



Right Turn Signal
(using right arm)



Stop Signal

Arm Signals

To ride safely in traffic, bicycle riders must use their hands and arms to communicate to other motorists around them. There are four important arm signs you should know and use every time you prepare to turn or stop (see above). Remember to signal, using your left or right arm, about one-third of a block before you plan to turn so vehicles behind you have ample time to slow down.

Your eyes are an important safety tool when riding your bike. Watch other drivers closely to make sure they have seen you and your arm signal.

Turning

Right Turns — Right turns must be made from the right lane. Stay as close as practical to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway.

Left Turns — When making a left turn, a bicyclist has two choices:

1. Make the turn as a vehicle would. When a left-hand lane exists, stay in the right side of that lane, then after entering the intersection look in all directions and make the turn when safe.
2. Stay as close as practical to the right curb or edge of the roadway as you enter the intersection. Proceed straight across the roadway to the opposite corner, then wait out of the way of other traffic. After obeying any traffic control device, you may directly cross the street again to complete the turn in the new direction.

Colors of Signs

Knowing the meanings of the basic colors of signs will help you recognize all signs.



RED

Stop, yield, do not enter or wrong way



YELLOW

General warning



ORANGE

Work-zone warning



BLACK

Regulatory



WHITE

Regulatory



BROWN

Public recreation areas and parks



BLUE

Motorist services guidance



GREEN

Distance, direction and information



YELLOW-GREEN

Pedestrian crossing and school-zone warning



PINK

Traffic incident

Traffic Signals and Signs

Traffic signs and signals tell drivers when to stop and when to go. They warn of railroad crossings and other hazards and tell you where you may ride your bike. Bicycle riders, as well as drivers, must obey all traffic signs and signals.

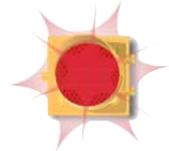
Traffic Light

- Stop at a red light.
- A yellow light is a warning that the light is about to turn red. Prepare to stop.
- You may go on a green light, but first look carefully to see if it is safe to go.
- A bicyclist may proceed, after yielding the right-of-way to oncoming traffic, through a red light that fails to turn green after waiting for at least 120 seconds.



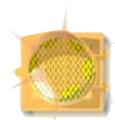
Flashing Red Light

Stop. Look left, then right, then left again. Proceed when safe to do so.



Flashing Yellow Light

Slow down and ride carefully.





Stop
Come to a complete stop.



Bike Traffic
This sign alerts other drivers that there is bike traffic on a street.



Yield
Slow down and let other vehicles or pedestrians go before you.



Pedestrian Crosswalk
Bicyclists and motorists must always yield the right-of-way to pedestrians.



One Way
Traffic may go only one way on this street. Ride in the direction the arrow points.



School Crossing
At a school crossing, you must let pedestrians go first.



Wrong Way
This sign tells you that you are riding in the wrong direction on a street.



Railroad Crossing
Stop, look and listen. Never ride through, around or under any crossing gate.



No Bikes
Bicycles are not allowed on streets or sidewalks where this sign appears.



Road Construction
Watch for bumpy roads and large equipment.

Approaching a School Bus

When approaching a school bus with flashing signal lights and its STOP arm out, bicyclists must give the stop hand signal and come to a complete stop. You may proceed when the STOP arm retracts and the flashing signals stop.



Parking

- Bicycles may be parked on the road at any angle to the curb or edge of the roadway where parking is allowed.
- If parking is allowed on a sidewalk, park your bicycle so it will not be in the way of pedestrians.

Right-of-Way Laws

Right-of-way means that one person has the right to go ahead of another. This applies to bicycle riders, motorists and pedestrians. If others do not follow the rules, let them have the right-of-way to avoid the risk of an accident.

Two-way Intersections — When you come to a stop sign at a two-way stop intersection, you must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and vehicles on the cross street before you go ahead.

Four-way Intersections — At a four-way stop intersection, the driver or bicycle rider who arrives first at the intersection should be the first to go. Take turns and go one by one through the intersection after coming to a complete stop. Proceed only when it is safe to do so.

Unmarked Intersections — At an unmarked intersection or crossing where there are no traffic signs or signals, the driver or bicycle rider on the left must yield to those on the right. When driving out of an alley or driveway, you must stop and yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and vehicles before you cross the sidewalk or enter the street.

Emergency Vehicles — Emergency vehicles with their lights flashing and sirens sounding always have the right-of-way. The law requires that you pull over to the side of the road and stop, if necessary, until the emergency vehicle passes you.

Disabled Persons — Blind, hearing impaired or physically disabled persons can be identified by their white canes, support or guide dogs. You must always yield the right-of-way to them.

Police — If a police officer directs otherwise, the right-of-way laws do not apply; riders and pedestrians must obey the officer's directions.

Bicycle Safety Tips

- ✓ **Make sure your bike is equipped for safety and working properly** (see page 1). Every bike should have the required reflectors. Check the brakes often to see that they are working. The seat and handlebars should be securely attached and properly adjusted. Wearing a helmet may prevent you from being seriously injured in an accident.
- ✓ **Keep both hands on the handlebars.** Use a backpack or a bike carrier to hold your books, lunch or other items. Ride slower on wet streets, loose gravel or bumpy roads.
- ✓ **Ride single file.** Do not ride next to each other if possible.
- ✓ **Always ride one to a bike.** Your bike is harder to balance with another person on it, and a passenger may block your view of what's around you.



- ✓ **Ride as close to the right edge of the road as practical.** Certain conditions allow a bicyclist to move farther to the left if necessary, such as broken glass, drain grates, parked cars, left turns and passing.
- ✓ **Ride in the same direction as other traffic,** not against traffic.
- ✓ **Slow down at intersections and railroad crossings** to ensure it is safe to cross.
- ✓ **Avoid riding at night.** If you must ride in the dark, the law requires that your bike have a front light visible from a distance of at least 500 feet and a rear red reflector visible for up to 600 feet. Always wear white and/or reflective clothing when riding at night.

Bicycle Safety Quiz

1. Always ride your bicycle:
 - a. on the opposite side of traffic.
 - b. in the middle of the road.
 - c. in the same direction as other traffic.

2. A bicyclist has the same rights and responsibilities as a person driving a car.
 True False

3. A person riding a bicycle must:
 - a. never use hand signals.
 - b. always use hand signals.
 - c. use hand signals only when he/she feels like it.

4. When approaching a pedestrian on a sidewalk, a bicyclist:
 - a. must give an audible signal and go around the pedestrian.
 - b. shout loudly to the pedestrian and tell them to move over.

5. A flashing red light means:
 - a. reduce speed.
 - b. stop.
 - c. caution.

6. You should always stop in the middle of a crosswalk.
 True False



7. When a school bus has its stop sign out, a bicyclist:
- can ignore it and go on by.
 - must give the stop hand signal and come to a complete stop.
 - can ride to the other side of the road and continue.
8. When crossing an intersection:
- without looking, quickly ride your bike or walk through it.
 - look left, right and left again, and cross when it is safe.
 - stop in the middle of the intersection and make the cars stop for you.
9. When cars and bicycles arrive at a four-way stop, who goes first?
- Cars always go first.
 - Bicycles go first.
 - The one who arrives first goes first.
10. It is permissible to make a right-hand turn on red:
- when you have come to a complete stop, checked the intersection to make sure it is safe to go, and checked for signs prohibiting a right-hand turn on red.
 - only if you are driving a car.
 - anytime you feel like it.



Bicycle Safety Quiz Answers

- c — You should always ride in the same direction as other traffic and stay as close to the right edge of the roadway as practical.
- T — Bicyclists must obey the same traffic laws that apply to motorists.
- b — Many accidents can be avoided if hand signals are used properly. Hand signals let drivers know what you are going to do.
- a — Pedestrians have the right-of-way on sidewalks. When approaching pedestrians, give an audible signal before going around them.
- b — You must always stop at a flashing red light.
- F — Crosswalks are designed to let people walk across an intersection and should never be obstructed by a car or other vehicles.
- b — Bicyclists must always signal and stop for a school bus and proceed when the stop arm is retracted and flashing signals stop.
- b — It is very important to check in all directions before crossing an intersection.
- c — At a four-way stop, drivers and bicycle riders are expected to take their turns and go one by one through the intersection.
- a — You may turn right in Illinois after making a complete stop, checking in all directions, and checking for signs prohibiting a right-hand turn.

**For more information
on bicycle safety, please contact:**

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